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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9527
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0029

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 000617

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA DAVID MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2028
TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL CU ES
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR COUNTRY REVIEW FOR TITLE III
SUSPENSION OF LIBERTAD ACT

REF: SECSTATE 52541

Classified By: ADCM DEBORAH KENNEDY-IRAHETA, REASONS 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Post recommends suspension of Title III of the Libertad Act for El Salvador consistent with the national interest of the United States. El Salvador does not maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba and El Salvador's current government has supported U.S. advocacy for democratic transition in Cuba. El Salvador has consistently abstained from the last six votes at the UNGA to condemn the U.S. embargo of Cuba. It is one of the few countries that have not supported these annual resolutions. As one of our staunchest allies in Latin America, El Salvador is contributing troops to ongoing efforts in Iraq and provides exemplary support for regional anti-narcotic programs.

¶2. (C) Specific responses to reftel section 5 are provided below:

A) When Fidel Castro resigned as Cuba's leader in February 2008, President Saca publicly expressed hope for a real democratic transition in Cuba and emphasized the importance of freedom of expression and multiparty elections. He signaled El Salvador's willingness to open diplomatic relations with Cuba if it shows clear evidence of real democratic reform.

B) El Salvador has no diplomatic relations with Cuba and post has no knowledge of diplomatic contacts between Cuba and El Salvador during the last year.

C) Post is not aware of any Salvadoran investments in Cuba.

D) El Salvador has no bilateral trade agreements with Cuba.

E) There are no official exchange programs between El Salvador and Cuba. The opposition FMLN has sponsored solidarity missions to Cuba where Salvadoran participants have received medical care. Post is not aware of Cuban doctors working in El Salvador.

¶3. (C) Comment: President Saca's public comments and El Salvador's UN voting record underscore El Salvador's support for democracy and human rights in Cuba. As one of the closest U.S. allies in Latin America, El Salvador has been a regional leader in promoting economic integration with the U.S. and supporting coalition forces in Iraq. Failure to extend El Salvador's Title III suspension would undermine U.S. relations with a key regional ally.

GLAZER